DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 087 118 EA 005 861

AUTHOR Candoli, I. Carl
TITLE Building the Concept of Comprehensive Planning into School District Organization.
PUB DATE 25 Feb 74
NOTE 5p.;Paper presented at American Association of School Administrators Annual Convention (106th, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 22-26, 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Comprehensive Districts; Comprehensive Programs; Decentralization; *Educational Planning; Models; *Organization; *Organizational Development; Planning; *School Districts; Speeches
IDENTIFIERS Lansing; Michigan

ABSTRACT

The author describes the comprehensive school system planning model being utilized in Lansing, Michigan. The presentation begins with a short discussion of the need for planning, then describes how the Lansing district organized and provided the resources for planning and how the model for planning was developed. The planning model organizes the school district along the six functions considered basic for all school systems to observe and provide: planning, delivery, evaluation, communications, noninstructional support services, and instructional support services. The model is based on the premise that it is desirable for decisions to be made as close to the level of the student as is possible. (Author/DN)

ED 087118

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
106th Annual Convention
ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. February 22-26, 1974

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SPEAKER: I. Carl Candoli, Superintendent of Schools, Lansing, Mich.

TOPIC: BUILDING THE CONCEPT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING INTO SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

PLACE: Regency Room, Sheraton-Deauville Hotel

TIME: Monday, February 25, 2:30 PM

PROGRAM: Page 84

FOR REALEASE UPON DELIVERY

It would seem appropriate to me that before we begin to discuss a particular comprehensive school system planning model (and the model being utilized in Lansing, Michigan, is the only one that I am familiar with) there is a need to prepare for the presentation of the model by a short discussion involving the need for planning.

Schools systems, particularly urban school systems, historically have had planning efforts - primarily in the area of facilities planning. There has been unfortunately, very little interest in and regard for the gestalt of planning - of comprehensive planning - including program planning organizational planning, financial planning and cooperative planning between and among the various agencies that exist in all communities.

The result of this rather haphazard development is that quite often there is serious and severe duplication of effort between and among the multitude of agencies so that effective planning, or whatever planning takes place, is performed as an aside and as an addendum to the already overburdened offices that direct the administrative affairs of the school system. It's apparent that as one views the totality of a particular school system, there is a rather over whelming hodgepodge of efforts, ideas and program thrusts.

Assuming that it is appropriate to have planning activities proceed in a systematic, orderly fashion: the school system must organize itself so that planning does occur. Planning activities are unique in that they should not be the final determination of action that a system takes, but rather provide a variety of options and alternatives from which decision makers can choose appropriate thrusts for the school system to engage in. Planning is and must always be a staff activity. It is not an end all but merely a way of gathering and interpreting as many variables as can be identified so that the decision maker can, with some degree of certainty, make appropriate determinations. Planning must have the capacity and flexibility to, at any point in time, go back to the drawing board to establish other options for the decision maker to consider. I think this is a most important point, for all too often the planner gets himself bogged down by internalizing a particular point of view of plan without fully comprehending the various nuances that impinge on decision making and in reality the planner assumes the role of the decision maker without the concomitant role of being responsible for whatever those decions bring.

In most urban centers, planning activities should proceed along with efforts to provide mechanisms for decisions to be made as close to the level of the student as is possible. In our particular case that meant a serious and concerted effort towards decentralizing our school system to the building level and developing a decision matrix such that at each level of the school system there was understanding of what appropriate decisions were for that particular level. This further complicates the planning task for in our case, for example, there are 57 school buildings in addition to the multitude of systemic planning activities that are carried on at the same time.

EA 005 861

more

We assumed that it was appropriate for systemic and local planning to proceed and that we had to organize to provide the resources for planning. In our case, that meant that decentralization was a very important component of the planning effort. How did we proceed to develop our model so that we progressed to where we are now?

Well first of all in Lansing, we initiated a massive effort to re-think our organizational pattern so that we were considering functions of the school system as opposed to the traditional task-area organizational concept. By that I mean, we had to reorganize so that we could provide resources for the rather massive planning effort we were envisioning while at the same time providing the necessary services to our newly decentralized units so that the day-to-day operations factor was taken care of. As you might suspect, this was not an easy development. It took the greater part of a year before our central staff group became comfortable with the fact that there was another way to organize in order to provide educational services to the clients of our city. Ultimately we came to agreement that there were relatively few basic functions that all school systems must observe and provide. We identified six and began an effort to reorganize along those functional lines. The six that we identified as being common to all school systems are these: First - the Planning Function. Programs, activities, procedures all must be carefully planned based on a needs assesment.

Second - The Delivery Function. After programs are planned, they must be delivered to the appropriate clients of the school system.

Third - The Evaluation Function. Evaluation of planning and delivery services as well as all other activities of the school system is an important and continous function.

Fourth - The Communications Function. Internal and External communications become crucial as a district plans and implements programs to meet student needs.

Fifth - Non-Instructional Support Services Function. This includes financial services, transportation, food services, custodial/maintenance activities, data processing, personnel activities as well as other important non-instructional functions.

Sixth - Instructional Support Services Function. Included here are such services as vocational education, special education, state and federal programs, continuing education, subject matter specialists, helping teachers, pupil personnel and other services directly utilized in support of the instructional program.

Using these agreed upon functions as the basis for a reorganization and also incorporating the superintendent's personal bias against the high-point pyramid type of organization so typical of school systems, we developed the organizational pattern as seen on the screen. It basically is a flattened out, more responsive organization: and really the chart does not do the intent justice. The whole purpose of reorganization was to better serve the students in our school system so that at the top of the chart should be the students and clients who really determine what activities are appropriate and where we provide them.

As we identified our particular clients, we found that the clients of the central staff are the various and sundry individual buildings and departments, for they are the ones that determine our activities and how we perform our task. The role of the central staff is to provide a variety of services to the clients (buildings) in addition to performing the multitude of systemic tasks. The attempt was also made to provide a span of control for individual administrators that would not be beyond the maximum limit of 10 to 12 so that we could respond and react to individual needs as quickly as they were identified and called to our attention. As you can see by the chart, we have several major divisions of the school system.

On the left hand side is the planning and non-instructional support services division. This division provides all of the non-instructional support activities including the personnel function and the variety of tasks related to custodial/maintenance, food services, data processing, etc. Also included here is the newly determined function that has great importance to our system -

that of planning. As you can see, the total planning effort is the responsibility of this division and included here are institutional research, facilities planning, program planning, development of new proposals, etc.

On the right hand side of the chart is housed the operations function - the delivery of services to clients. Here are all our direct delivery services including elementary, secondary, continuing education, instructional support services, adult education, special education, vocational education, etc.

Down the central portion of the chart are those services which are across the board and, therefore, report directly to the office of the superintendent. Included here are the evaluation services: also included here are financial services - purchasing, distribution of resources, payroll activities, etc. This reflects another personal bias of the superintendent in that it is my feeling that if a superintendent loses control of the financial operation of the school system, one of two things can happen; The first is that educational decisions are being made by non-educators based on other criteria than those I hold important, and second, they may not be made at all. Either way the superintendent ultimately pays. Also included here are such extraneous activities as the public library, which happens to be under the control of the board of education, and such support service activities as the communications system and special services division.

While we were busy developing a reorganized school system, we were concomitantly developing a thrust for what we call responsible autonomy or decentralization. It's our strong conviction that the best of all educational decisions are made when they're made as close to the student as we can make them, understanding that there are systemic goals and objectives which, by law and also in fact, are the purview of the central board of education. These objectives and goals should set the parameter within which individual buildings can develop institutional goals and objectives to meet the varying individual needs of the students housed in a particular facility. It's our conviction that no two of our buildings serve exactly the same clientele and that there are enough differences and varieties found throughout our city that individual buildings should develop delivery systems most suited to the needs of their own clientele and the indigenous strengths of their own staff and community. Therefore, it's been our effort to strongly indicate what the systemic goals and objectives are and also to provide the capacity for individual buildings to devise programs and delivery systems most suited to their own clientele and individual strengths. In other words, the system's goals and objectives are the overgirding limits within which individual objectives are developed. Building objectives must relate to systemic goals and objectives. These objectives determine the kinds of services most appropriate to the clientele of the building. This too was a fairly dramatic departure from the status quo. It took a considerable gestation period before principals and staff began to take hold and utilize the flexibility that is now inherent in each of our buildings.

With all of that as a background and a prelude, we can begin to address how we went about developing our planning model. We have a model we consider best suited for us. It's not the end all as far as planning models go. It's a starting point for us, and I'm sure that as time goes by we will refine and redevelop it so that its most suited to the particular concerns that we have in our system. Very briefly it's a circular model, and we've based this on the Cipp model of decision making. We plan according to that model; we make decision according to that model. Very briefly the Cipp model is a four-phase model where we consider context evaluation to set the parameter; input evaluation which can be adjusted according to the resources and other indigenous kinds of available inputs; process evaluation which involves the mechanism for delivery; and finally product evaluation which is a final test of how well we've done in terms of meeting the objectives we've established.

Using this as the basis for our own planning effort, we have developed what we call a range-planning system whereby we consider short-range planning activities to be zero to two years in length, middle-range planning activities to be three to five years and anything over five years to be long-range planning activities. We're quite ambivalent about this because given the rapidity with which changes occur in our society, we almost tend to feel that anything over two to three years is really long range in nature. By that we mean that millage issues come up, contractual negotiations arise; so that we just don't have the luxury of being very accurate beyond a two to three year span. But none the less, this is the range-planning model currently being utilized.

One of the functions of the planning division is to utilize this model with individual departments and buildings and to help these various buildings develop their own range plans with their own community and their own staff so that we understand what it is they're going to do. Once this is established then our evaluation services division has a continuing responsibility to monitor, to meet with the planning people in view of their findings in order to assist the individual departments and buildings in the recycling and the adjusting of plans to meet student needs.

The posture that we have taken in terms of our planning division is that they are available to any and all components of the school system; to advise, to assist and certainly to plan. They have primary responsibility for systemic planning which involves careful evaluation, review and refinement of board of education goals and policies in addition to the development of systemic objectives that grow out of these goals and policies. Additionally the planning division provides planning effort in terms of a shifting demography related to facility needs, in terms of program objectives and in terms of systemic kinds of programs. For example, in our town we have a series of alternative education programs that have been developed by the planning division; and these programs are generally one of a kind and serve the entire city so they're not the purview of local school buildings. A good example of this is what we call our academic interest center that serves four of our high schools with one-of-a-kind curricular activities ranging from advanced calculus and science to modern dance to ethnic studies, etc. There are other one-of-a-kind activities that serve the entire system and are the direct purview of the planning division for conceiving and initiating.

Beyond the systemic kinds of planning that go on (and there are so many that it does tend to keep these people extremely busy) there is a responsibility to advise and participate with local units as they do their own planning. We have imposed on each local building the requirement to develop range plans as a basis for a continuing evaluation of their activities. We have also notified these people that the planning office is available to assist them as they think through what it is they're trying to do, to help them develop their own needs assessment, to develop options with them based on needs assessment and to do whatever other technical activities are appropriate to the development of range plans for that particular building. We do not insist that buildings use the planning division (although 98% of them do) because we recognize that in some buildings there are leaders who are just naturally competent in the planning activity and it would be a waste of our own resources to duplicate the effort that's already going on. We do, however, require that divisions, buildings and departments make periodic progress reports on their planning activities to the planning division so that we can compile a gestalt of what planning is proceeding in the total system. Therefore, the planning office conducts planning meetings with differing and various groups from throughout the system on a regular basis. They meet with school groups, community groups, with divisions, with departments and compile on a systematic basis the objectives of those particular units so that at the end of the span of time indicated as appropriate by that unit, we have some notion of what's happening and how successful we are in that particular activity.

All the while I've been talking, I've been showing a variety of slides and pictures which

ere intended to indicate the pluralistic nature of our school system - the diversity that exists in a typical urban school system. We've been fortunate and we are fortunate that we're in very close proximity to a major university, Michigan State University. We've also been extremely fortunate to have the complete cooperation of the College of Education under the leadership of Keith Goldhammer, and most particularly for our planning effort, the complete dedication and cooperation of Dr. Dick Featherstone, who is chairing this meeting. He has allocated his own personal resources almost entirely to our school system to help us as we evolve our planning effort. With Dick's help and with tremendous input from all of the departments of the College of Education, we have been successful, I think, in developing not only our planning component but also in providing specific efforts to address many of the crucial issues that exist in our city. We're only beginning and have just scratched the surface. We, through Dick's cooperation, have what we call an extern program involving some 85 of our administrative personnel in addition to some of our teaching personnel and the focal point of this extern program, which meets either on weekends or in the evening, is the planning activity of the school system. In addition, through efforts of Michigan State we have been able to develop an individualized masters and specialists program that's available to any of our people and enrolls several hundred. We have a teacher center which is basically providing in-service education necessary to deal with the emerging kinds of educational needs we're able to identify. All in all we're comfortable that some rather significant strides are being taken. I will proceed through the carrousel to show classroom shots, and again they're in no particular sequence but merely an effort to show the diversity and the activities that do take place in our town. We're very excited because for the first time, to my knowledge, we've a common thrust that is beginning to bind us together and that thrust is the planning effort that is taking place in our school system. Thank you.

####